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[71] hoherian, and this is best expressed in their high degree of contentment. Our natives are uncomplainingly satisfied with all the misfortune they must endure because of the weather, with the sharp restrictions resulting from the scarcity of products of the soil, and with the constant hampering of free movement as a result of the overwhelming forces of nature. One would scarcely believe it possible for a people to be resigned to such few pleasures and such scant comfort. One never hears them complain or grumble about the hard living conditions that have been imposed upon them, and they bear with inevitable composure the lot that has befallen them.

[53] Nevertheless, they have not let themselves become a weak plaything of natural forces. In the rigor of battle they have steeled themselves to resistance, and their certainty of triumph gives them that independence and self-reliance that is content even in the most miserable situation. In their struggle with nature for subsistence our Fuegians develop well-trained mental powers and an unsurpassed skill. Even Bridges (b) 40 in concise terms credits them with great merit: "They have various methods of hunting and killing birds, and in all they show much skill" /translated from Spanish/. The observations and experience of many generations have alone perfected the efficient methods of trapping and hunting with which every Indian is sure of success without having to waste effort. He practiced them from the days of his youth until he became skillful and expert. Many of the manipulations and movements, carried out with calmness and some effort, seem simple and easy to the eye of a European (307):

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> 307. Bove (p) 137 adds to this, saying "Only someone who has lived among them can have any idea of the effort and cunning which they are obliged to muster in order to obtain the most frugal livelihood for themselves."

the keen humor and unerring marksmen excite admiration. If a European would try his hand at this he would become vividly aware of how stiff and awkward he is at doing the things the Indian does every day.

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147 753 The Yamana is proudly aware of his own superiority. Along /559/ with his astonishing agility, he has developed his physical strength, and time and again on the hunt he has opportunities to develop and increase it (308). Thus he overcomes all difficulties

> 308. Bridges agrees with this unreservedly: "These people certainly show the greatest fortitude, endurance, and energy in following at their hunting" /cited in English/ (MM:XII, 12,1878).

and impediments in the way of his goals. He does not grow tired of hunting his prey and of fighting the hostile forces of nature, but each morning he devotes himself with fresh courage and renewed confidence of victory to his difficult daily task. Hence to struggle with his environment and to wrest from it the animals he needs for his sustenance is for every man a daily necessity, in part a desired one (309). It is not easy for him, but his well-

> 309. Hyades (f) 167 has grasped this mental attitude of these children of nature in the following words: "The Fuegians, in fact, consider the hunt a pleasure as well as a necessity /translated from French/. He has really described the situation very well.

developed mental powers, his extraordinarily practiced senses, his great skill, and his personal assurance in the control of his tools and implements guarantee him success.

22 His mental agility effortlessly and intuitively senses the opportunities for the hunt and the general demands of every season. He never shows discontent with the rigors of winter, which impede his free movement on land, nor with the incalculable changes of weather in summer, which only too often lead his light canoe into danger on the water. During one half of the year he patiently does without the things that the other half will again offer him. He attentively follows the change which each

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124 773 The material in the following pages probably constitutes the entire treasure of myths that has been at the disposal of our Fuegians since ancient times. In gathering it, I was remarkably favored by fortune on my second journey (p. 178 /untranslated/). Although it is not customary among our Fuegians for a woman in a mixed gathering to relate long episodes from her own experiences or from a myth, nevertheless some Fuegian women faithfully preserve much legendary material in their memories, and very willingly offer it at an occasional gathering of female friends and neighbors. It seems to me that vainglory and the desire to shine in front of others by relating one's own deeds and remarkable experiences is far less developed in women than in men and that it is therefore easier for a woman storyteller, without much digression, to adhere logically to the main point of the myth. For most of the stories current among the Tekeenica I am indebted to the mentally alert Julia, the wife of old Alfredo, who is unanimously regarded by her countrymen as the one best informed about them. I learned from her for days (p. 178 /untranslated/). Further material that I gathered on my third and fourth journey was made up of supplementary explanations and unimportant details. Many a myth was also repeated to me by other persons. Thus I believe that I have gathered all the mythological material that the Tekeenica have preserved from hoary antiquity down to the present day.

a. The Origin of the World

773 •153 The mentality and the way of thinking of our Fuegians have been only cursorily described above. Nevertheless, from what has been said, no European will expect much from them in the way of a clear conception of the origin of the world or a well-ordered picture of the universe. Actually they have only individual short trains of thought which can be neither consistently continued nor linked together without gaps. What may have happened at the beginning of everything visible is much too distant to merit special attention by our Fuegians, who are creatures of the moment, so to speak, for whom the given

/[114] cont./

reality of each day is of decisive importance. /[115]/ Moreover, these recurrent events are completed episodes and accomplished facts. The Tatgans clearly and definitely separate them from everything that Tatgan introduced and from what the principal persons of the individual legends undertook. The Tatgans is reminded of their achievements almost daily without any effort on his part. Important inventions and significant regulations are attributed to the younger Tatgan and some of his brothers and sisters, but they were not predominantly active in the formation of the universe. The Tatgans also say that the earth was destroyed, after that orderly conditions again developed.

As was just mentioned, the individual short narrations do not form a continuous, well-ordered whole. It is quite likely that in recent times small connective pieces have been lost. I personally, however, consider it probable that the quite large gaps have existed since ancient times. I base my conclusion chiefly on statements to this effect by a few old people. I am also guided by my experience among the Solitaren who up to the present time have preserved an imaginative conception of the origin of the universe in its final form, which is more or less complete, as well as rich in content. If the Solitaren succeeded in preserving their ancient tales so complete, coherent unity, why should the Tatgans, who did not allow themselves to be robbed of many another heritage, have lost important connective portions? The fragmentary pieces that the Tatgans do possess, however, will be valuable for a comparative study of myths if they can be related to some extent to the legends of other peoples.

1. Heaven and Earth

The Solitaren are superior to the Tatgans insofar as they recognize in the person of Kgaib the creator of the visible world, who functions under the direction of the Supreme Being (Vol. I, 570) and who is therefore on a par with the redeemer as he appears in other mythologies. The Tatgans regard their homeland as an accomplished, given phenomenon. They do not ask and do not

/1438 cont./

181 Experts on primitive peoples must cast doubt upon the trust-
114 worthiness of all these reports on Tierra del Fuego, and from in-
significant accounts as well as fair judgements, they brought out
many a favorable detail. Wanin:107 emphasized: "One must
not believe that the mental dullness [of the Fuegians] prevails
throughout among them.... The four Fuegians whom Captain Fitz-
roy took with him to London showed altogether good qualities."
Koppers:I, 320 appreciates their material possessions and social
institutions. Beyond that he declares: "The more one learned
of their sensibilities and mental capacities upon closer contact,
the higher one evaluated them in this respect. The Fuegians,
even though they are oppressed by the misery of their situation,
are basically Indians like all the rest. The inadequate results
of missions cannot prove anything to the contrary." Thus, if
the Yaghan are judged to be genuine Indians, they must also be
regarded as capable human beings. The fact that they are indeed
such is convincingly proved by their way of life which has been
described in the foregoing pages. The following pages will be
a not inconsiderable supplement to this. It seems strange to us
who have been privileged to obtain such deep insight into the
mental life of most of the primitive peoples still available today
that it seems necessary to prove that the Yaghan, too, are al-
together human beings.

/1437/ a. Mental Power and Sensory Activity

153 I regard as beside the point the oft-repeated question as to
18 whether the Yaghan are an "intelligent people" and capable of
meeting the demands of our culture. One will obtain a just
evaluation of their mental powers only after he has learned to
understand the Fuegians with respect to their mastery of their
environment. They have adapted themselves excellently to their
country: they have learned to use the available materials for
serviceable implements and have asserted their superiority in their
struggle with the forces of nature. Indeed, they maintain them-
selves in their environment and have attained several not incon-
siderable achievements of which many Europeans would be

/1437 cont./

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incapable if they were suddenly transplanted to that environment. The totality of their cultural possessions, properly understood as having been fashioned from their natural surroundings, is persuasive testimony as to the mental capacities and well-developed senses that our Fueglans enjoy. They needed to develop their mental aptitude only to a certain degree, and were able to do so, in accordance with the external demands made on them. Once this equilibrium was achieved (345), there was not only a

> 345. Darwin did not see this state of equilibrium. Basing his discussion on the poverty of that corner of the globe, he (d) 247 judges quite falsely: "How little the higher mental powers can be exercised here; what can the imagination picture there, what can reason compare, judgment decide? To break off a bowlful of mussels from a rock does not even require craftiness, this humblest mental capacity of an animal. In some respects their skill can be compared to animal instinct, for it is not refined by experience; their canoe, their most ingenious invention, miserable though it is, has remained the same for the last 250 years, as we know from Drake.

lack of pressure for greater accomplishments, but these would have resulted in a disturbance of the equilibrium. Hence there was an actual standstill, with a steadfast persistence throughout centuries in the particular form of culture with its many striking and insignificant details which was finally achieved after an inestimable number of separate experiences and which assures the Fuegian an adequately satisfying existence.

1. Mental Activity

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Far from being forced and led by blind instinct alone, the Yamana's actions often follow long, thorough consideration. He

/1437 cont./

• 153 makes a plan for a particular goal, considers the ways and means of achieving it, tests the forces at his disposal, and carefully observes the development of his undertaking. Sometimes he discusses it with others and secures the advantages of their advice, experience, and co-operation. He wisely takes into consideration what seems to be most useful for his purpose. Whether the attempt succeeds or not, he mercilessly renders an account of it to himself and his neighbors. In /1438/ so many words he judges this act a failure and that one as the decisive turning point toward success. To their own shame many a man and woman will frankly complain to others: "I should have done this or that some other way, then I would not have made a useless effort!" Every outsider who carefully observes the Yamana can find hundreds of examples to prove their causal thinking. True, our Fuegians often act without much reflection and do not thoughtfully go over a matter if they must make a momentary decision. Their thoughts then come in fits and starts and their decisions are made without premeditation. Aside from the fact that in this form of behavior they resemble all other groups of human beings, in such a situation they are at least guided by an instinct trained through experience and enlightened by quick thinking. Their language has plenty of bluntly descriptive words for persons who always act thoughtlessly or who behave stupidly.

A person who often considers his own experience and who more than others thinks about the behavior of persons around him will attain considerable keenness of judgment with which he protects himself against mistakes. It is not surprising that a sharp-witted Yamana likes to emphasize: "What our forefathers taught us is most preferable, is most suitable!" He realizes that this or that arrangement or specialty proves to be far better than new experiments, hence everybody's respect for tradition, for the many details and individual items of their cultural heritage. The members of the tribe seek advice from a person who is mentally superior; they follow this advice whenever unusual circumstances arise. To act after judicious consideration, to evaluate calmly the effects of an act, and to adapt to all the knowledge gathered by experience -- all this has led our Yamana to adopt whatever is most serviceable in their country. All subsequent generations

/1438 cont./
have clung to it (346).

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346. It is meaningless to say, as Hyades (q):268 maintains about the mental capacities of our Yamana, "that they are little developed, are not applied to bettering existing conditions, and seem incapable of improvement" /translated from French/, or, as Lovisato (b):144 declares, "the Fuegians have little intelligence, very little memory, no retentiveness" /translated from Italian/.

182 The meager natural products that the region offers could probably not be better utilized for modest requirements than they have been by our Fuegians. In particular, the technical perfection of their weapons and implements should be noted (p.210), the efficiency of which could probably not be increased. Men, as well as women, have at their disposal only inadequate resources and raw materials. After all, the tools they use are their own handiwork. One must marvel at the usefulness and effectiveness of all the objects that their patient labor fashions from the rough material. The "artisans" pay careful attention to /1439/ beauty and regularity, which are, correspondingly, more or less praised by other people. Further endeavor and the urge to perfect a piece in order to achieve greater efficiency thus lie beyond the wish and will of the Yamana. For them the traditional goods are the best and most effective because they have been tested by previous generations. With these and similar words the retiring generation justifies itself to the rising generation for its definite resolve, in its own day, to cling to the form of culture achieved and handed down by their forefathers and to abide by it steadfastly (347). Recognizing the useful service of the dog,

347. Weddell (a):6 gave an incorrect explanation: "It has been denied that the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego have any capacity for mental development and they are credited with an animal instinct. I believe

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this condition is merely the result of their remote location, and that it would soon improve with frequent visits from outsiders. I found them obliging and friendly, indeed, in some respects active and inventive."

which was introduced only about two centuries ago, they adopted this animal within a short time (p.292) and accordingly have used the bow and arrow less (p. 155). The material possessions that in recent times have passed from Europeans to the Yamana certainly do not represent an enrichment or an improvement of their conditions of life (p. 382).

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Anyone who compares the mental activity of our Yamana with that of the neighboring Selk'nam will realize that there is an easily recognizable difference. The slowness of the Selk'nam in making decisions and their obvious perplexity in a suddenly altered situation is by no means as widespread among the Yamana. The latter are, by comparison, more animated, more active, and quicker in making decisions. It is particularly striking that the Yamana will immediately understand a joke or a humorous remark, whereas the Selk'nam almost always needs to have it explained. The two tribes, however, resemble one another in their amazing memory which does not fail them under any circumstances (Vol. I, 1089). This is especially true of their memory for places. Finally one must point out a very reliable gift of observation which has helped the Yamana to know in detail everything about their own country and to notice immediately any change. This gift also makes it possible for them to imitate exactly the movements and sounds of animals (348). They have

348. My statements are abundantly confirmed by definite examples given by Hyades (q):249 and by many statements of missionaries.

many opportunities to show this accomplishment, not only on the hunt or in the Kina, but especially in their social games.

/1441 cont./

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"Modesty exists in both sexes, but it is more developed among the women" /translated from French/. Compare the same opinion in Bridges (n):208. Hyades (p):335 and (q):239 goes even further in the following words: "One will perhaps be astonished to read here that the feeling of modesty is very highly developed among the Fuegians, who are in the habit of going naked" /translated from French/.

well developed; the form and content of Fuegian rules of etiquette are surprising. Bridges later corrected many of his false assertions when he confessed: "The native mind is much more settled in approval of what is good and against evil than ever I have known before, and they are consequently better behaved, and exercise more self-control" /cited in English/ (MM: XVIII, 31, 1884). The licentiousness imported by Europeans has very considerably undermined the former strictness of moral obligations and duties, to the great detriment of the natives (p. 353 /untranslated/).

/1442/ 3. Development of the Senses

●153 What has been said about the mental powers of our Fuegians also implies that they have an adequately developed imagination. It is lively, though not very creative. Nevertheless, its achievements are not slight, considering the many spirit figures in the Kina and the numerous personalities in their mythical world, as well as the considerable variety of games and decorations, ornaments and body paintings. The gift of invention which has created all this and many other things cannot be regarded as limited. The fact that it is still alive is proved by the curiosity of these children of nature toward strange objects. Not infrequently their behavior is even importunate in this respect. Agreeing with many travelers, Despard confirmed: "The Fuegians are very curious, and naturally watch all you do; they like to touch, and feel everything they see" /cited in English/ (VP:VI, 167:1850).

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153 This healthy curiosity is combined with a goodly measure of desire for knowledge and aptitude for being taught.

151 In the development of their sensory activity the Fuegians by far surpass us Europeans, and the acuteness of their senses sometimes amazes us, as all critics agree. The sharp eyes of the Yamana miss practically nothing, not the least change, no matter how insignificant, along his path, in his tools, in another person. With sure judgment he recognizes the tracks and traces of animals along the ground, as well as the occupants of a canoe appearing on the horizon. His eye is unerring in observations close at hand or at a distance. Even in old age everyone enjoys excellent vision, although some older people become farsighted, so that if they are looking at or working over smaller objects they must hold them farther away from their eyes. The eyes of the natives can stand direct sunlight and strong light from the hut fire far better than would be possible for European eyes. Hyades (f):380 and (p):219 declares: "The Fuegians have satisfactory visual acuity and... they are, in general, gifted with a great power of accommodation" /translated from French/. Darwin (f):I, 43 affirms briefly from his experience: "I had ample opportunity to observe the extraordinary eyesight of the Fuegians" (353). Their amazing skill in sign language must also

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353. He (d):230 also says by way of supplement: "Their eyesight was remarkably acute. York and Yemmy both were considerably superior to all the sailors on board; several times they said what some distant object was, and, although everyone doubted it, they proved to be right when the object was examined through a telescope. They were well aware of this ability." Bove (c):135 and others agree.

be mentioned here. In a way unintelligible to others they can reliably send even important messages to a person and transmit them to the person for whom they /1443/ are intended. This explains the mistrust of everyone toward all those who form a

/1445 cont./

Without noticeable coercion, the young people improve themselves, one more than another, according to their natural gifts and personal diligence. Someone who is particularly alert and mentally active makes more rapid progress; the adults are more willing to take trouble with him and they teach him many things earlier than they do his contemporaries. The fact that among the Yamana, also, some persons have a good deal more knowledge than the average can be traced back to inclination, industry, and a desire to learn. Some are extraordinarily limited and know only what is most necessary. A person who commands superior knowledge attracts those around him, influences them, and is highly regarded far and wide. The superior position of most yékamus rests on the fact that they surpass their countrymen in their possession of things of the mind.

If one should gather together all the knowledge gained by experience and the numerous individual facts that every Yamana possesses, he would build up an astonishing fund of information. Borrowing from this source, every generation enriches itself anew and finds it adequate to meet the demands of existence, to satisfy the needs of the mind, to attain the economic goals, and to lead an ordered, harmonious tribal life beneficial to each individual. Relying on his knowledge and his powers, the Fuegian, as master of the animal kingdom and the strong forces of nature in his unfriendly country, strives toward his goals and is confident of victory.

/1446/ 1. Measuring and Counting

The Yamana lack a universal standard of value, such as money or the various kinds of measures. They must resort to estimating actual value in one way or another. This is done according to certain considerations, not the least of which, and often decisive, are the beauty and perfection of the object. The scarcer a thing is, the higher its value. These and other considerations are naturally decisive in barter. They also determine whether the recipient of a gift rates it higher or lower. On page 873 there are examples showing a kind of scale of value. It is obvious that our Yamana are unable to evaluate the things given to them by